

LAST RANGER / NEXT RANGER

12 July 2004 – Drowning – Lake Discovery

Summary:

Mr. Joseph Doe
Everytown, US

On 10 July 2004 at 1615, Mr. Doe, age 34 was riding a PWC in Lake Discovery approximately ¼ mile east of Creek Access on the north side of the lake. Mr. Doe's wife was a passenger on the PWC. Her report stated that they had both fallen off of the PWC after an abrupt turn. After Mr. Doe had successfully re-boarded the vessel, Mrs. Doe apparently re-boarded and inadvertently turned the PWC over again. At this point, Mr. Doe's USCG approved type III PFD became entangled in the left handlebar of the PWC as it became inverted again. This entanglement functioned as a restraint and left Mr. Doe's head 80% submerged. Due to high boat traffic, the reservoir was choppy and the waves subsequently proved too high to allow Mr. Doe to breathe normally. A passing boater stopped and struggled to free Mr. Doe at which time he dragged the victim aboard a nearby pontoon boat. CPR was initiated by passengers and gained no response. COE ranger and State Water Commission officer were on lake patrol and responded. Upon arrival, the ranger and officer took charge of CPR, which was administered without positive response until emergency vehicles arrived in Discovery Campground. At this time, the victim was transported to the waiting emergency personnel. Upon transfer to EMTs on scene, Mr. Doe was pronounced dead at 1637 hours, Saturday, July 10, 2004.

LAST RANGER/LAST OPPORTUNITY:

Park Rangers were on duty in the area from 0730 until 0030. Lake patrols by rangers had been conducted at 0900, 1100, and 1300. A joint lake patrol between Corps rangers and State Water Commission was being conducted at the time of the accident. In each patrol, rangers encourage people boat safely and with a friend and to practice other water safety techniques.

The Bulletin Board at the victim's launch site is posted with Water Safety Information.

Local radio stations air water safety messages given by Corps rangers each morning.

Water safety programs were conducted that week to advise people of the hazards of swimming and boating and the techniques of safe PFD use. In the week previous to the accident, rangers had given over 8 hours of water safety programs and had reached approximately 160 visitors.

NEXT RANGER / NEXT OPPORTUNITY:

Rangers continue to patrol all fee lands and the entire reservoir, performing Visitor Assistance and encouraging the safety of all visitors.

Bulletin Board information provides safety related information pertaining to water safety.

Rangers continue to support efforts of the Safe Kids Program, co-sponsoring the YMCA learn to swim program, and partnering with State Water Commission and Sheriff's Department to promote boating and water safety.

Continue to encourage water safety to all visiting public and conduct water safety programs that are free of charge and open to the public. These programs will now include a greater emphasis on safe PWC use and proper PFD use, to the extent of advising how to be familiar enough with your PFD to remove it in emergency situations.

Lake Discovery also provides assistance to local communities, businesses, and the State with water safety information and materials for distribution.

Rodney Ranger
Lake Discovery